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ABSTRACT

This factsheet contains information about the numbers and status of ethnic minority women in Great Britain. In 1991, the last full count, 1.5 million women in Britain classified themselves as other than White. Women from all ethnic groups are less likely to be economically active (paid for work or looking for it) than men. However, among ethnic minorities, 55% of women were economically active in 1995-96, compared with 73% of White women. Black Caribbean were much more likely to be economically active than Pakistani or Bangladeshi women. Black Caribbean women had the highest employment rate among ethnic minority women in Britain. On average, ethnic minority women earned about what White women earned, but the hourly wages of all women were lower than those of men. In the 16-24 age bracket, 47% of ethnic minority women were in full or part-time education in winter 1995-96, compared with 32% of White women. Chinese women in this age group had the highest participation in education; Black Caribbean women had the least participation. A greater proportion of ethnic minority women had higher education qualifications (13%) than White women (12%), and over 20% of Chinese and Black African women had high educational qualifications. In all ethnic groups, except Chinese and Black African, a higher proportion of working women than of men were teachers. Additional information is included about the status of ethnic minority women in relation to domestic life and crime. (Contains 10 references, 6 tables, and 3 figures.) (SLD)

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Ethnic Minority Women

Commission For Racial Equality

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ETHNIC MINORITY WOMEN

POPULATION

▶ At the last full count in 1991, 1.5 million women in Britain classified themselves as other than White. (See Table 1)

▶ The ratio of males to females across all ethnic groups is now approximately 1:1. However, in 1991 there were significantly more males than females in the Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Other groups and more females than males in the Black Caribbean and Other Asian groups.

Table 1. The female population of Great Britain in 1991, by ethnic group

	Number	%
All	28,313,900	100
White	26,807,400	95
All ethnic minorities	1,506,500	5
Black Caribbean	260,500	17
Black African	105,600	7
Black Other	90,900	6
Indian	417,400	28
Pakistani	231,000	15
Bangladeshi	77,900	5
Chinese	79,300	5
Other Asian	103,900	7
Other	140,100	9

Source: *1991 Census*

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND EMPLOYMENT

▶ Women from all ethnic groups are less likely to be economically active than men (that is, to be in paid work or looking for it). In 1995/96, 72% of women of working age were economically active, compared with 85% of men.

▶ Among ethnic minorities 55% of women were economically active in 1995/96, compared with 73% of White women. However, there were considerable variations between the different groups; for example while 7 out of 10 Black Caribbean and White women were likely to be active in the labour market, this was true of only 2 out of 10 Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. This figure may be an underestimate, however, because many women in these groups work in the family and in the informal economy.

▶ 46% of women from ethnic minority groups were in paid work in 1995/96, compared with 68% of White women. Black Caribbean women had the highest employment rate among ethnic minority groups (60%) and Bangladeshi and Pakistani women the lowest – 13% and 17% respectively. (See Table 2)

▶ 77% of ethnic minority women who were economically inactive in 1995/96 were studying or looking after family or home compared with 66% of their White counterparts. Women in the Other category were most

Table 2. Economic activity and employment rates, by sex and ethnic group, averages for June 1995 – May 1996

	% women		% men	
	Economically active	Employed	Economically active	Employed
White	73	68	86	78
All ethnic minorities	55	46	76	61
Black Caribbean	72	60	81	64
Black African	62	44	76	55
Black Other	66	55	77	59
Indian	62	55	81	70
Pakistani	22	17	69	51
Bangladeshi	21	13	69	47
Chinese	54	50	67	59
Other Asian	56	52	71	62
Other	45	38	74	57

Source: *Labour Force Survey, Summer 1995 – Spring 1996*

NOTES: *The term 'ethnic minorities' is used to describe all those who did not classify themselves as White. Ethnic minority categories are those used by the census and the Labour Force Survey. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

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Table 3. Industrial activity, by ethnic group and sex, averages for June 1995 – May 1996

	White		Non-White		Black		Indian		Pak/Bang		Other	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Manufacturing	25	12	22	15	17	8	28	25	26	*	14	8
Construction	12	2	5	*	7	*	5	*	*	*	*	*
Wholesale, retail, motor	14	17	18	16	12	10	23	24	18	26	16	11
Hotels & restaurants	3	6	9	7	5	7	3	4	20	*	16	13
Transport, storage & communication	9	3	12	4	14	*	11	*	13	*	9	6
Financial services	4	5	3	4	*	4	*	4	*	*	*	*
Real estate, rent & business activities	10	9	10	10	12	11	11	9	6	*	10	9
Public admin & defence	6	6	4	7	7	8	*	6	*	*	*	7
Education	4	12	3	8	*	8	*	7	*	*	5	8
Health & social work	3	19	8	22	8	34	7	13	7	*	10	21
Other communication soc and personal	5	6	4	4	7	*	*	*	*	*	*	6

Source: *Labour Force Survey, Summer 1995 – Spring 1996*

likely (32%) to be students, followed by Black (21%) and Indian women (19%) (see Figure 1). Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were most likely (71%) to be looking after family compared with an average of 53%. 14% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women said they were studying, the same proportion as among economically inactive White women. Overall, 23% of ethnic minority women were likely to be studying.

SELF EMPLOYMENT

▶ Chinese women (27%) were nearly four times more likely to be self-employed than the average for working women (7%) in 1995/96. Overall, 5% of working ethnic minority women were self-employed, compared with 17% of ethnic minority men.

TYPES OF JOBS

▶ 68% of all working women were employed in the private sector in 1995/96, compared with 82% of working men. 66% of all working ethnic minority women were employed in the private sector compared with 82% of all ethnic minority men. Indian women were most likely to work in the private sector (78%), whereas 49% of Black Caribbean women were employed in the public sector, the highest proportion of any group.

▶ Indian women in 1995/96 were as likely as White men to work in manufacturing. Another quarter worked in the wholesale and retail sector; only Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were more likely to work in this area. One third of Black women, and one in five women from the Other groups worked in the area of health and social work, compared with 19% of White women. (See Table 3)

▶ In 1995/96, ethnic minority women were as likely as White women (31% each) to be working in white collar jobs, for example, as managers, administrators or professionals, but less likely than either White (39%) or ethnic minority (40%) men.

▶ Nearly a quarter of all Pakistani and Bangladeshi women (23%) worked in sales compared with an average of 11% for all women and 6% for all men. Only 7% of Black women worked in sales.

FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME?

▶ In 1994, 67% of ethnic minority women in employment worked full-time compared with 54% of White women in employment. Black women were most likely to work full-time. 42% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women worked part-time compared with 46% of White women. (See Figure 2)

EARNINGS

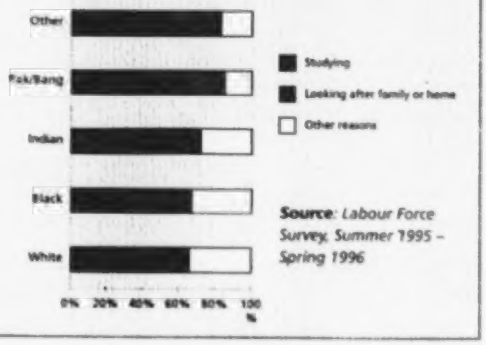
▶ On average, ethnic minority women earned roughly the same full-time hourly pay as White women in 1994/95. (See Figure 3)

▶ Women from all ethnic groups had lower hourly pay rates than men. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women earned only 68% of the average hourly rate of White women.

HOMEWORKING

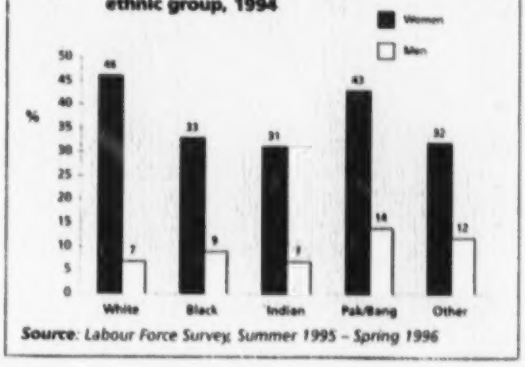
▶ 8% of all women in paid work were homeworkers in 1995/96, compared with 13% of men. 6% of working ethnic minority women were homeworkers, compared with 8% of White women

Figure 1. Main reasons for women's economic inactivity, by ethnic group, averages for June 1995 – May 1996



Source: *Labour Force Survey, Summer 1995 – Spring 1996*

Figure 2. Part-time work, by sex and ethnic group, 1994



Source: *Labour Force Survey, Summer 1995 – Spring 1996*

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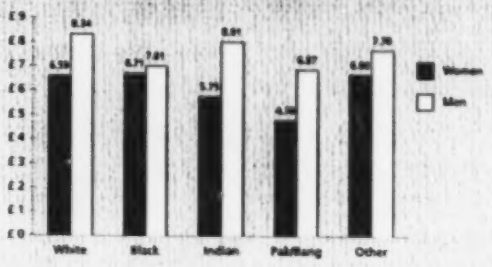
Figure 3. Average full-time hourly pay, by sex and ethnic group, 1994/95



Source: *Labour Force Survey*

and nearly 8% of ethnic minority men. 9% of Indian and 9% of Bangladeshi and Pakistani women in paid work were homeworkers.

UNEMPLOYMENT

▶ 16% of ethnic minority women of working age were unemployed, in 1995/96, compared with 6% of White women. Black Caribbean women were significantly less likely to be unemployed than their male counterparts. Black African women had an exceptionally high unemployment rate. (See Table 4)

▶ 30% of all ethnic minority women between 16 and 24 years old were unemployed, compared with 12% of White women of the same age. 37% of Black Caribbean women in this group were unemployed.

TRADE UNIONS

▶ 33% of ethnic minority women employees were in trade unions in 1995, compared with 29% of White women. Black women were most likely to be trade union members (42%), followed by women from the Other category, including Chinese (32%). 27% of Indian women were union members. (*Labour Market Trends*, May 1996)

TRAINING

▶ Ethnic minority women were more than twice as likely as White women to be on government training schemes, such as Youth Training or Employment Training, in 1993.

EDUCATION

▶ 47% of 16-24 year old ethnic minority women were in full or part-time education in winter 1995/96, compared with 32% of White women. White women were the least likely of all to be full-time students. Chinese women between 16 and 24 had the highest participation rate of women from all ethnic groups (66%). Black Caribbean women were least likely of all ethnic minority women to become full-time students (32%). (See Table 5)

QUALIFICATIONS

▶ Women from all ethnic groups, except Black Caribbean, were less likely to have higher qualifications than men, in 1991. The proportion of Black Caribbean women with a higher qualification was twice that of Black Caribbean men. (See Table 6)

Table 4. Unemployment rates for working age, by ethnic group, averages for June 1995 - May 1996

	Women	Men
White	6	9
All ethnic minorities	16	20
Black Caribbean	16	22
Black African	29	27
Indian	11	13
Pakistani	25	26
Bangladeshi	*	32
Other	11	17

** cell sizes under 6,000; estimates not included*

Source: *Labour Force Survey, Summer 1995 – Spring 1996*

Table 5. 16-24 year-old women in full-time education, by ethnic group, 1995/96

	Women
	%
White	32
All ethnic minorities	47
Black Caribbean	32
Black African	42
Black Other	36
Indian	51
Pakistani	46
Bangladeshi	39
Chinese	66
Other Asian	62
Other	56

Source: *Labour Force Survey, Winter 1995/96*

Table 6. Higher education qualifications, by ethnic group, 1991*

	Women	Men
	%	%
White	12	15
All ethnic minorities	13	18
Black Caribbean	12	6
Black African	22	31
Black Other	13	12
Indian	11	19
Pakistani	4	10
Bangladeshi	3	7
Chinese	24	28
Other Asian	20	30
Other	21	30

** Includes a degree or nursing or business qualification.*

Source: *1991 Census*

▶ A greater proportion of ethnic minority women had higher education qualifications (13%) than White women (12%). Over 20% of Chinese and Black African women had higher qualifications – the highest proportions of women from any group. The lowest proportions were of Pakistani and

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Bangladeshi women (4% and 3% respectively).

▶ Unemployment was more than twice as high among Black people with higher qualifications (9%) as it was among similarly qualified Whites (4%).

WORKING IN EDUCATION

▶ In all ethnic groups except Chinese and Black African, a higher proportion of working women than of men were teachers. 5.2% of working White women were teachers compared with 2.5% of White men.

▶ 8% of Bangladeshi women and 7% of Other women were teachers. Between 1% and 3% of women from each of the other ethnic minority groups were teachers.

DOMESTIC LIFE

MARRIAGE AND COHABITATION

▶ 99% of women and 96% of men in their 40s from Pakistan or Bangladesh were married or had been married, compared with 94% of White women and 90% of White men in their 40s. About 20% of both Black Caribbean men and women in their 40s had never been married. (1991 Census)

▶ People from Black and White groups were equally likely to cohabit, but more likely to than people from South Asian groups. 7% and 11% of White men and women respectively between 16 and 24 cohabited, compared with 6% of Black Caribbean men and women, and 4% of Black African men and women. Less than 1% of South Asian men and women in this age group cohabited. 9% of Black Caribbean women between 25 and 39 cohabited, compared with 10% of White women. 19% of Black Caribbean men in this age group cohabited, compared with 11% of White men. (1991 Census)

DIVORCE

▶ Divorce rates for South Asians were much lower than for other ethnic groups in 1991. Between 1% and 3% of South Asian men and women over 16 had experienced divorce, compared with around 5.5% of White men and 6.8% of White women. Black Caribbeans had the highest rates of divorce – 10.7% of women and 8.6% of men.

MIXED PARTNERSHIPS

▶ 12% of all ethnic minority women in 1994 were married to White partners. 57% of women of mixed ethnic origin are married to or cohabiting with a White partner. (Berrington 1994)

▶ 23% of Black women were married to or cohabiting with people of different ethnic origin in 1991, compared with 32% of Black men and 1% of White men and women.

SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES

▶ 90% of single parents are women. 32% of Black families in 1995 were single parent families with dependent children, compared with 8% of White families and 7% of South Asian families. (EOC 1995)

▶ About half of Black women in their 30s are heads of households, compared with about one in ten South Asian women.

CRIME

VICTIMS

▶ Women in 1992 were less at risk than men from all types of violent crime except domestic violence. Eight out of ten incidents of domestic violence were against women. 0.6% of White people reported having been victims of domestic violence in 1991. 1.2% of Afro-Caribbeans reported domestic violence and 0.1% of Asians did so. (It should be noted that these percentages were based on small samples.) (BCS 1992)

OFFENDERS

▶ Ethnic minority women were 24% of the female prison population in 1995. Ethnic minority women of UK nationality were 14% of that population.

▶ 11% of female prisoners, excluding foreign nationals, were Black, 1% were South Asians, and 2% were Chinese and Other Asians.

▶ In 1993, 67% of Black women prisoners who had been sentenced were in prison for drug offences. Excluding foreign nationals the figure was 46%.

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